

Library

U R B A N D I S T R I C T O F B U R N H A M - O N - S E A

A N N U A L R E P O R T

O N T H E

H E A L T H O F T H E U R B A N D I S T R I C T

F O R T H E Y E A R 1 9 5 4.

R. H. WATSON, M.B., B.Ch., B.A.O., D.P.H.

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

U R B A N D I S T R I C T O F B U R N H A M - O N - S E A

BUILDING AND SANITARY COMMITTEE 1954

Chairman:

MR. R.F. TREGELLES

MRS. E.E.J. HERRING MR. T.F.S. FORSE

MRS. S.C. TREGELLES MR. G.W. GULLIFORD

MRS. W.G. TROWBRIDGE MR. P.E.J. HIGGINS

MR. F. PARSONS

PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF 1954

Medical Officer of Health:

R.H. WATSON, M.B., B.Ch., B.A.O., D.P.H.

Building and Sanitary Inspector:

W.B. GRAHAM, M.R.S.I., M.S.I.A.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR 1954.

Health Department,
Albert Street,
Bridgwater.

August, 1955.

To:-

The Chairman and Members of the
Burnham-on-Sea Urban District Council.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in presenting my Annual Report for the year 1954. The report contains the usual information on the health and sanitary circumstances of the district, and is laid out in the same manner as previous reports, so as to facilitate comparison with previous years.

During the year the District remained free from serious epidemics and the high standard of health which has been enjoyed by the people of the District was maintained. Indeed, the vital statistics compare very favourably with those for England and Wales as a whole, and correspond to those which would be expected from a progressive and healthy community in a satisfactory environment.

The diphtheria immunisation campaign has been intensified and, as will be seen later in the report, there has been a most satisfactory increase in the number of young infants being immunised.

Once again I wish to thank the Members of the Council, and Clerk, and Officials of other Departments, and the Staff of the Public Health Department for their willing assistance and co-operation.

I am,

Your obedient servant,

R.H. WATSON,

Medical Officer of Health.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2017 with funding from
Wellcome Library

<https://archive.org/details/b28965048>

SUMMARY OF STATISTICS

Area (including foreshore) = 2,245 acres

Population:- Registrar General's estimate for 1954 ... 9,580

Rateable Value = £75,383

Sum represented by a penny rate = £296

GENERAL STATISTICS

Registered Live Births.

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Legitimate	165	83	82
Illegitimate	8	5	3
	<u>173</u>	<u>88</u>	<u>85</u>

Birth Rate per 1,000 of estimated population 18.06

Still Births 5

Legitimate 5
Illegitimate -

Still Birth Rate per 1,000 (live and still) births 28.09

Deaths.

<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
128	58	70

Crude Death Rate per 1,000 of estimated population 13.36

All Infants 5. Rate per 1,000 live births 28.90

Legitimate Infants 4. Rate per 1,000 legitimate live births 24.24

Illegitimate Infants 1. Rate per 1,000 illegitimate births 125.00

VITAL STATISTICS

Births.

After allowing for inward and outward transfers the Registrar General's figure for the Urban District was 165 live births, and of these 88 were male and 85 female. This gave a Birth Rate of 18.06, which when corrected for age and sex distribution of the population gave a Standardised Birth Rate of 20.59. As a comparison the rate for England and Wales was 15.2.

Deaths.

After correction for transferable deaths the total assigned to the District was 128, which showed little change from the previous year, and was made up of 58 males and 70 females. The Crude Death Rate was 13.36, but when Standardised this became 9.49, while the comparative figure for England and Wales was 11.3.

Out of the total of 128 deaths 70 occurred in persons over the age of 70 years. The primary cause of death was again heart disease (40) with cancer second (18).

The following table shows the causes of death and the sex distribution:-

CAUSE OF DEATH	M	F	TOTAL
ALL CAUSES	58	70	128
1. Tuberculosis, respiratory	-	-	-
2. Tuberculosis, other	-	-	-
3. Syphilitic disease	-	-	-
4. Diphtheria	-	-	-
5. Whooping cough	-	-	-
6. Meningococcal infections	-	-	-
7. Acute poliomyelitis	-	-	-
8. Measles	-	-	-
9. Other infective and parasitic diseases	1	-	1
10. Malignant neoplasm - stomach	1	1	2
11. Malignant neoplasm - lung, bronchus	1	-	1
12. Malignant neoplasm - breast	-	4	4
13. Malignant neoplasm - uterus	-	1	1
14. Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms	7	3	10
15. Leukaemia, aleukaemia	-	-	-
16. Diabetes	-	1	1
17. Vascular lesions of the nervous system	11	13	24
18. Coronary disease, angina	6	7	13
19. Hypertension with heart disease	-	1	1
20. Other heart disease	11	15	26
21. Other circulatory disease	7	2	9
22. Influenza	-	1	1
23. Pneumonia	-	-	-
24. Bronchitis	1	3	4
25. Other diseases of the respiratory system	1	1	2
26. Ulcer of stomach and duodenum	-	1	1
27. Gastro-enteritis and diarrhoea	-	-	-
28. Nephritis and nephrosis	1	-	1
29. Hyperplasia of prostate	2	-	2
30. Pregnancy, childbirth and abortion	-	-	-
31. Congenital malformations	1	-	1
32. Other defined and ill-defined diseases	4	11	15
33. Motor vehicle accidents	-	2	2
34. All other accidents	2	3	5
35. Suicide	1	-	1
36. Homicide and operations of war	-	-	-

The Crude Death Rate for the past ten years is as follows:-

1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954
17.8	13.2	13.8	11.7	12.5	14.01	17.77	13.18	13.33	13.36

Infant Mortality.

The number of infants dying within the first 12 months of life was 5, as compared with 4 in the previous year.

Cause of death:-

<u>Cause.</u>	<u>Number.</u>
Atelectasis	2
Cerebral haemorrhage	1
Pneumococcal meningitis	1
Prematurity	1

Age of death:-

Under 24 hours	under 1 week	1 month or under	under 1 year over 1 month
2	2	1	-

Infectious Diseases.

The following table sets out the details of infectious diseases notified during the year and also the figures for the previous year.

Disease	1954	1953
Measles	-	297
Scarlet Fever	15	7
Dysentery	-	1
Whooping Cough	42	11
Pneumonia	11	10
Poliomyelitis	-	1
Puerperal Pyrexia	1	-
Erysipelas	1	-
	70	327

Poliomyelitis.

It is pleasing to report that no cases of poliomyelitis were notified during the year.

Diphtheria and Whooping Cough Immunisation.

The campaign to increase the percentage of children immunised against diphtheria was intensified and the following table shows the number of children protected, with the corresponding figures for the previous year in brackets.

<u>Aged under 5 years.</u>	<u>Aged 5 - 15 years.</u>	<u>Total.</u>
136 (81)	43 (22)	179 (103)

It is possible to combine immunisation against whooping cough with immunisation against diphtheria, and this combined vaccine is now being used on an increasing scale, where it is requested by parents. Modern treatment has tended to reduce the severity of whooping cough, but nevertheless it is at present the most serious infectious disease from which children in this country usually suffer, and complications which frequently arise may have life long effects. The greatest danger is when very young infants are affected and in order to protect them it is essential that any scheme of immunisation against whooping cough should be completed at an early age. In this area it has therefore been decided that when parents wish to have their children immunised with the combined vaccine against diphtheria and whooping cough, the course of injections should be commenced at the age of four months, instead of the more usual age of nine months when protecting against diphtheria alone. With the vaccine in common use, protection against whooping cough is not always complete, but in those children who may subsequently contract the disease the severity of the attack is often diminished.

Diphtheria.

No cases of diphtheria were notified. This satisfactory state of affairs is almost entirely due to the nation wide immunisation campaign which was begun in 1942. The following table shows the incidence and number of deaths from diphtheria in England and Wales since 1945, and clearly shows the progress which has been made.

<u>Year.</u>	<u>Deaths.</u>	<u>Corrected Notifications.</u>
1945	722	18,596
1946	472	11,986
1947	244	5,609
1948	156	3,575
1949	84	1,890
1950	49	962
1951	33	664
1952	32	376
1953	23	266
1954	9 +	182 +

+ = provisional

Vaccination.

The number of children vaccinated or revaccinated during the year was 58, as compared with 67 for the previous year.

Under 1 year		1 to 4 years		5 to 14 years		15 years or over	
P	R	P	R	P	R	P	R
49	-	5	-	2	2	8	20

P = Primary vaccination. R = Re-vaccination.

Vaccination is now voluntary, but the value of individual vaccination is, in my opinion, undiminished and I would advise all parents to have their children vaccinated, preferably at about the age of four months.

Tuberculosis.

The number of cases of pulmonary tuberculosis notified during the year was 8, as compared with 9 in the previous year. 2 cases of non respiratory tuberculosis were also notified. There were no deaths recorded as due to tuberculosis.

New cases notified:-

<u>Age Periods</u>	<u>Respiratory</u>	<u>Non-Respiratory</u>
0 - 1	-	-
1 - 5	2	-
5 - 15	-	-
15 - 25	2	1
25 - 35	3	-
35 - 45	-	-
45 - 55	1	-
55 - 65	-	-
65 and upwards	-	1
Total new cases	8	2

National Assistance Act.

No action was taken under Section 47 of the above Act. However, a number of cases were dealt with by informal action. Here tribute must be paid to the excellent work being done by the Home Help Service which is administered by the County Council. Without the assistance of the Home Helps, at times working under the most appalling conditions, it is difficult to see how some old people could have been looked after in their own homes. In the District 4 full time and 9 part time Home Helps are employed, and during the year they attended 50 cases.

Housing.

During the year 71 permanent houses were erected by the Local Authority, and 16 by Private Enterprise. A further 25 houses were under construction by the Local Authority and 9 by Private Enterprise. The Local Authority have built 371 Post War Houses, and the number of applicants for rehousing at the end of the year was 337.

SANITARY CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

1. Water Supply.

The water supply to the District was satisfactory as to quality and generally also as to quantity. On no occasion was it necessary to cut off the supply, but in the peak holiday season when demand is greatest the pressure in the mains falls drastically. The Council's new water scheme was in process of completion and this should remedy the difficulties at present experienced at times due to low water pressure.

Bacteriological examination of the raw water was carried out on 15 occasions and all but one gave satisfactory results.

Examination of the treated water in supply was on all 16 examinations reported as excellent.

Chemically the water is "very hard", the hardness being mainly of a temporary nature.

2. Sewage Disposal.

Apart from a few isolated cases, main drainage is available throughout the area. At Highbridge Clyce unsatisfactory conditions arise from the existing method of sewage disposal, and the Council have approved a scheme which will overcome the trouble. Until the existing conditions at the Clyce are remedied there remains the potential threat to the health and economic welfare of the District which might well have very serious results.

3. Milk Supplies.

- (a) The number of Registered Distributors is 10.
- (b) The number of Registered Dairy Premises is 5.

Four supplementary licenses have been issued to distributors whose dairies are outside the area.

Milk Sampling.

14 samples of Tuberculin Tested milk were taken and all of these were satisfactory.

12 samples of Pastuerised milk were taken, 10 of which were satisfactory and 2 unsatisfactory.

4 samples of milk were taken for Biological examination. All were satisfactory.

4. Ice Cream.

The number of premises registered for manufacture
and sale.. 5
For retail only 44

The Number of samples taken is as follows:-

	<u>Hot Mix.</u>	<u>Cold Mix.</u>
Grade 1	36	9
Grade 2	15	3
Grade 3	5	-
Grade 4	4	-

Sampling results have proved satisfactory and standards of cleanliness are well maintained.

5. Slaughter Houses.

There is one in use in the District. We have no Slaughter House in use where horses are slaughtered for human consumption.

The total number of animals slaughtered during the year was 73,642.

The following was condemned as unfit for human consumption:-

1. All diseases except Tuberculosis. Number of pigs.
Whole carcasses condemned 37
2. Tuberculosis only.
Whole carcasses condemned 10
3. Altogether 55,976 pounds of meat were condemned because of the presence of tuberculosis and 17,742 pounds were condemned for other causes.

6. Premises where food is prepared.

The number registered under Section 14 of the Food and Drugs Act 1938, is 14. Frequent inspections are made to ensure satisfactory conditions.

7. Knackers Yard.

One knackers yard is registered in this District and is visited frequently.

8. Refuse Disposal.

Refuse is disposed of by tipping into a disused claypit, which contains water, and in the past unsatisfactory conditions have arisen during the warm weather. The Council have approved a scheme for drawing off the foul water.

